

The Open Mike^{District 2}

A Newsletter From Councilman **Mike Knapp**

Volume 1, Number 8

November 2005

A Moment at the Mike

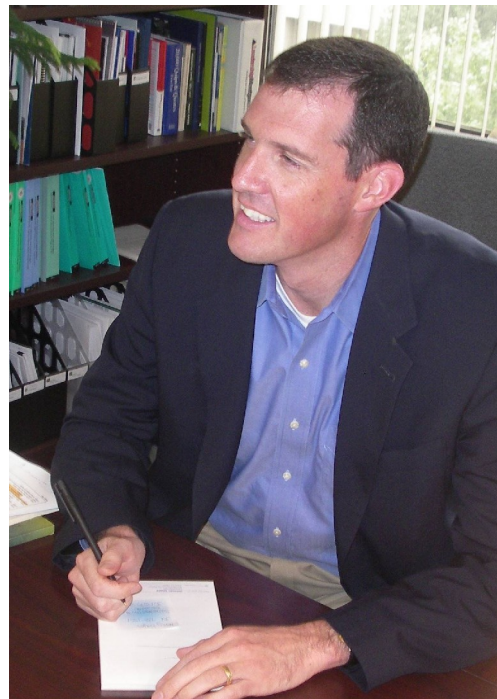
Knapp Proposes Reforms to PIF Policies

Reform Package Prohibits Extending Water and Sewer in Ag Reserve; Provides Incentives for PIF Expansion Near Transportation Corridors

Our 25-year-old Agricultural Reserve – 93,000 acres set aside for agricultural uses and open space – has been called the “crown jewel” of the County, and rightly so. Careful management of this land means striking the right balance between preservation and accommodating growth.

At issue now are Private Institutional Facilities (“PIFs”), which are defined in law as buildings constructed by non-profit organizations such as places of worship, private schools, senior housing, or daycare centers. Under current statute, PIFs have generally been allowed greater flexibility for development in any zone in the County, including within the Ag Reserve. The underlying assumption has been that PIFs are beneficial to the surrounding community and have less impact on the land than a residential or commercial development. Those were the initial assumptions when the policies were drafted 25 years ago, but what it means today is that we have policies in which two generally beneficial interests – agriculture and houses of worship – must directly compete for use of the same land.

I feel a great responsibility to seek ways to strengthen policies that will support our Agricultural Reserve while at the same time developing policies for the County to allow PIFs to grow in residential or commercial zones within the transportation corridor, and helping overcome the economic challenges inhibiting their growth in these areas.



Councilmember Mike Knapp

The Council created a task force to explore alternatives to our existing PIF policies. The task force proposed a number of changes to limit the size of PIFs in agricultural zones, including setting a limit of 15% on impervious surfaces, which is a surface that water can't pass through, like a building or parking lot. I appreciate the efforts of the task force, but I have some real concerns with the recommendations because they may have the unintended consequence of

doing more harm to our agriculture and environment, without still addressing the true needs of PIFs.

If, for example, we were to impose a 15% impervious surface limitation, as recommended by the task force, it would force PIFs to acquire even more acreage for their facilities, which would increase their costs and make more land unavailable for agriculture. While the intent of this recommendation is commendable, a cap of any kind on impervious surfaces – whether that cap is 8, 15 or 40 percent – could have unintended consequences.

If we are serious about addressing these issues, then I would propose that we need to take a multi-faceted approach that addresses *at least* the following four components

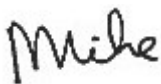
1. **Further Incentives for Ag Easements:** We must create a market-based economic incentive through refinement of our TDR program that will allow property owners in the Ag Reserve to sell their development TDR's and provide the County with the ability to put that land into a perpetual agricultural easement.
2. **Prohibition of Water and Sewer Extensions in the Ag Reserve:** Development always follows the water and sewer lines. We must prohibit the extension of water and sewer in the Ag Reserve.
3. **Creation of PIF Development Incentives and Zoning Modifications:** We must recognize the economic reality that our PIFs are confronting and provide incentives to make commercial parcels a viable option for expansion, and identify potential locations or zones that are suitable for the location of large PIFs.
4. **Clarification of Multi-Use Septic Systems:** We must establish a reasonable framework to evaluate proposals for multi-use septic systems that are compatible with current RDT zoning.

On this last point, I have introduced for Council consideration [an amendment](#) to our Comprehensive Water and Sewer System Plan that would protect the environmental and agricultural character of the RDT zone as envisioned in the 1980 Agricultural and Rural Preservation Mater Plan and regulate and limit the capacity of new multi-use systems that are used in that zone.

There is a need for us to move quickly to address all of the issues that are involved in a comprehensive manner, and not merely take a piecemeal approach just for the sake of taking some action. It is important that we wisely handle these challenges and create new opportunities to preserve and enhance our Agricultural Reserve as well as support our faith-based institutions within the County. Working together, I'm sure we can do it.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me if you have concerns, comments, or questions. It's my pleasure to serve.

Warmest regards,



Mike Knapp
Councilmember

OLO Report:**Clarksburg Woes Reflect Flawed Regulatory Process**

On Tuesday, November 8, the County Council received [Office of Legislative Oversight Report 2006-3](#), the independent fact-finding review of the Clarksburg Town Center (CTC) project requested by the County Council in July 2005. When the Council made its request this past July, we specifically asked the [Office of Legislative Oversight](#) (OLO) to develop a chronology of events for the approval and implementation of the CTC; identify flawed processes, lack of coordination, or other problems that occurred during the approval and implementation process; and provide the Council with recommendations for next steps.

The 181-page report -- for which the OLO interviewed 125 different experts, legislators, policymakers, advocates, and citizens, and reviewed more than 300 documents -- concludes that much of what has gone wrong in Clarksburg can be attributed to flaws in the regulatory process established by the Montgomery County Planning Board and its staff for the approval and implementation of Preliminary Plans of Subdivision, Project Plans, and Site Plans. These shortcomings fall not just within Park and Planning, but across all county government agencies involved in planning, including the County Council and County Executive. Given the span of the problem, it needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner

Among the Report's findings:

1. The regulatory process established by the Planning Board and its staff lacked predictability and reliability, failed to adopt clear decision documents, lacked a complete record, and was not sufficiently transparent.

The report found that documents approved by the Planning Board and its staff contain ambiguous language and internal inconsistencies; as a result, the regulatory process failed to produce one clear and certain set of approval conditions, including development standards such as height and setback.

2. The CTC Project Developer contributed to the confusion in the record of approvals.

According to the OLO report, the CTC Project Developer prepared, submitted, and signed documents that contain errors and internal inconsistencies; further, any discrepancies were not brought to the Planning Board for clarification.

3. Gaps in inter-agency coordination contributed to problems with the CTC project.

OLO found that neither Park and Planning nor Permitting Services had a system in place to check where building permit applications met the height standards in the approved CTC Project Site Plans.

4. The laws governing the regulatory approval process for the CTC project contain ambiguities in the process to be followed and the assignment of agency responsibilities.

OLO's research showed that the law does not specify the procedural rules for the Planning Board to follow when deciding regulatory matters, further, there are 'gaps' in the laws regarding Mixed Residential Use zones, Project and Site Plans, and agency responsibility for enforcement of some permitting.

5. Significant problems were found in how the Planning Board and its staff handled questions and complaints from members of the Clarksburg community about the CTC project plans, both approved and pending.

In the opinion of the OLO, when faced with community inquiries or complaints, the Planning Board and its staff did not adequately answer questions or adequately comply with request for documents. Nor did the Planning Board carry out a timely and fact-based investigation of its own, when faced with specific complaints.

To address these flaws, the OLO report recommends the County Council reform the oversight system through three sequential recommendations:

First, **the Council should articulate clear and certain expectations for the characteristics of the regulatory process** and translate those expectations into law and regulations.

Second, the **Council should direct the Planning Board Chairman to submit, no later than January 15, 2006, a comprehensive management improvement plan** to address the flaws that OLO observed in the regulatory process.

Third, **the Council should revise how it approaches its annual budget review and semi-annual meetings with the Planning Board** in order to sharpen the Council's oversight of the Montgomery County portions of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

The Council is presently working to address each of these recommendations.

Next Steps...

Upcoming Action on Clarksburg

On Tuesday, December 6, the Council will hold public hearings at 7:30 p.m. on the following measures:

- [ZTA 05-17](#), Site Plan Enforcement
- [ZTA 05-18](#), Planning Board Public Hearings -- Public Examiner
- [ZTA 05-19](#), Site Plan Enforcement
- [SRA 05-04](#), Site Plan Enforcement
- [Bill 35-05](#), Permitting Services -- Site Plan Enforcement

As always, the public is encouraged to participate, whether by attending in person, or submitting testimony. (For information on how you can testify, please call (240) 777-7931.)

On Saturday, **December 10**, Councilmember Nancy Floreen will host a forum on "Accountability on a Post-Clarksburg World," to discuss how the county manages and controls growth. The forum runs from 9:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the Johns Hopkins University Montgomery County Campus at 9601 Medical Center Drive in Rockville. For more information, contact Councilmember Floreen at (240) 777-7959.

Park and Planning Chairman Derick Berlage is scheduled to transmit a comprehensive management improvement plan, [as recommended by the OLO Report](#), by **January 15**.

Knapp, Regional Leaders Support Dedicated Metro Funding



For Montgomery County residents, the Metro system is a central part of our lives. While Metro does not yet extend into the Upcounty area -- the end of the line is presently at Shady Grove -- the odds are good that you or members of your family or community ride the Metro with some regularity. Whether it's a trip into the District to work or see the sights, a ride to National Airport, or just a short trip down to Bethesda to see a movie and eat in a restaurant, Metro remains one of the best ways to get around the Greater Washington DC region.

Metro has its share of problems, but we're very fortunate to have such a reliable, accessible, and clean system to serve our area. But we need to take care of it.

As the incoming Chairman of the [Transportation Planning Board](#) (TPB) for the [Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments](#) (COG), one of my priorities is to ensure we redouble our efforts as a region to provide a dedicated source of funding for Metro. On October 3, I was pleased to serve as a panelist at a summit to discuss just this topic. The summit, hosted by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro), the Greater Washington Board of Trade, Federal City Council, and COG, discussed policies and objectives to locate a dedicated funding source for Metro, what such a process and might entail -- including amending the current compact binding all the governments who utilize Metro -- and proposals being considered by the Congress to improve the Metro system.

At the conclusion of the Summit, I co-signed the following resolution, which lays out a number of formal recommendations and policy changes that I plan to pursue as Chairman of the TPB:

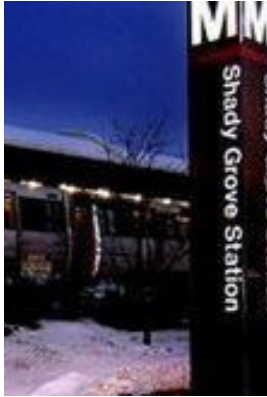
RESOLUTION FOR REGIONAL SUMMIT ON THE FUTURE OF WMATA

Be it resolved by the participants of the October 2005 Regional Summit for the Future of WMATA Funding that:

- 1. The jurisdictions represented at this Summit pledge to work cooperatively on options for funding WMATA, including alternative forms of dedicated funding.*
- 2. The Summit participants support the efforts of H.R. 3496 to provide significant increased federal funding consistent with the substantial role WMATA plays in transporting federal employees and maintaining the continuity of federal government operations.*
- 3. In recognition of enhanced federal funds, the Summit participants agree to develop WMATA Compact amendment to include appointees representing the federal government on the Board of Directors.*
- 4. The Summit participants agree to work cooperatively with Congress to maximize federal funding and to ensure that pre-conditions for federal funds are satisfied. In this effort, the Summit participants agree to work with Congress to support federal legislation consistent with the commitment of the region to develop funding options.*
- 5. The Summit participants acknowledge the continuing efforts of the WMATA Board to evaluate improvements to the budget and business processes of the agency. The Summit participants urge implementation of actions to improve accountability, business planning, revenue and expenditure forecasting, transparency, and costs effectiveness. Additionally, the Summit participants agree to develop WMATA Compact amendments to establish an Office of Inspector General of WMATA and possibly other amendments to enhance accountability of the agency. These efforts are paramount to regional support and enactment of any local, state or federal funding enhancements.*

Shady Grove Master Plan

Knapp Abstains on Straw Vote; Seeks More Info on Staging Requirements, Webb Tract



The [Shady Grove Master Plan](#) is one of the most complex land use planning decisions that is presently being undertaken by the County Council. One of the real challenges is to balance the many competing priorities that are at play in this comprehensive master plan. We have before us an opportunity to create neighborhoods that can take full advantage of the many transit and transportation options that the Shady Grove area offers, while at the same time providing the community with amenities that might not otherwise be affordable, such as new schools or recreational facilities. However, we must be sure to take into careful consideration the needs of the existing community, and that any approved plan has the tight staging requirements needed for future infrastructure.

Woven into this discussion is the potential opportunity to meet the growing needs of our County's service operations by relocating county facilities at a new site. While the County Service Park is presently located on County-owned land near the Shady Grove Metro, the County Executive is looking at the feasibility of relocating these facilities to allow for full modernization and expansion. The County Executive is exploring the county's options, and will likely soon issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) that might have land available to house and support such a facility. Industrial-zoned land located off of Snouffer School Road in East Montgomery Village near the County Airpark -- also known as the Webb Tract -- has been the subject of considerable discussion as to whether this could be a potential site for a relocated County Service Park.

It's important to recognize that while a private development team is soliciting to have the Webb Tract as the site for the new service park, no decisions have been made. The Webb Tract development team is required to submit an application in response to the county RFP, as is any other potential candidate. Any final decision regarding this project will ultimately fall to the County Council, where public input will figure to be critical.

We need to be certain that the final version of the Shady Grove Master Plan does exactly what we envision it to do, and that it has the infrastructure staging requirements to make it work as it should. The County also needs to be sure that it has taken a comprehensive review and assessment of the future needs of our County services, and that all available land and site options have been fully explored. While finalizing the Shady Grove Master Plan is a separate decision from where to relocate County services, we owe it to all communities to know in advance the requirements for our department and agencies, as well as the site options available.

Right now, we just don't have enough information regarding the location of county services, nor adequate assurances that we can ensure staging requirements are adequate in such a well-established community. That's why I abstained on a recent straw vote that the Council recently took on the Shady Grove Master Plan. We need to obtain more information and better understand some of the moving pieces first, before committing to a plan that will guide us for the next twenty years.

Drop me a line at Councilmember.Knapp@montgomerycountymd.gov and let me know what you think.

School Board News**Board Votes on Clarksburg, Northwest #7 Boundaries**

At its Thursday, November 17 meeting, the **Montgomery County School Board of Public Education** voted on the boundary proposals for the Clarksburg and Northwest #7 districts. While the Council has no oversight of district boundaries, I have been pleased to pass along to the School Board the comments and petitions I have received from Upcounty residents regarding these proposed boundaries and boundary adjustments. Here's the latest information I have:

- **Clarksburg District:** The Board unanimously adopted the Superintendent's recommendation. However, students in grade 10 who wish to remain in their current district may [request a transfer](#) back into their current home district. The Board has stated that these requests will be expedited.
- **Northwest #7:** The primary concern I heard from district residents pertained to the impact of the Superintendent's proposal on the Matsunaga Elementary School SM2B district. During consideration of the Superintendent's proposal, Board members Ervin, Navarro, and O'Neill offered an amendment to keep SM2B in the Matsunaga district. Their amendment was defeated by a 4-3 vote. After failure of the Ervin/Navarro/O'Neill amendment, the Board adopted the Superintendent's recommendation for the district.

Additional information can be found on the MCPS Board of Education website.

'Sand Mounds' Bill Must Consider Viability of Farming in Ag Reserve

Earlier this month, Expedited Bill 38-05 was introduced to temporarily prohibit the use of mound septic systems. While I understand the intent behind this legislation is to protect the Agricultural Reserve from the encroachment of residential development, I believe the legislation must also take into account the affect it could have on the viability of farming in the reserve.

Because public sewer is largely discouraged in the Ag Reserve, many county farmers who live and work in the reserve must resort to other methods for waste filtration and disposal. While most farms use septic systems, many prefer to use—or have no choice but to use—the sand mound method, which forces sewage up into sand mounds for filtration before sending it back beneath the surface. Over the past months, I've been working with our county's farmers, planners and the community to put together proposals and initiatives that take a comprehensive approach to ensure that agriculture flourishes and expands. What has been reiterated time and again, however, is that many times, in our efforts to preserve the Ag Reserve, we sometimes take actions that may inadvertently do more harm than good.

Survival of the Ag Reserve depends on the economic vitality of the family farms and ranges that operate every day of the year. We need to ensure that farms stay operational—and that means making sure they have adequate ways to dispose of sewage when more traditional septic systems are not an option. Sand mounds sound simple until one learns that some agricultural operations rely heavily on sand mound systems to keep their farms economically viable.

Before we consider a blanket moratorium, we need to examine the challenge of agricultural preservation and expansion in a comprehensive and thoughtful manner. For that reason, I am continuing to propose that we bring the community and all of the stakeholders together to do this and not blindly go down paths that are piecemeal, at best, and may, at worst, do more damage to the very farmers we are hoping will continue to survive and flourish in the Ag Reserve.

Take Steps to Keep Your Heating Costs Down

With the costs of oil escalating, residents who rely on natural gas, heating oil or propane to heat their homes -- and that's an awful lot of us -- are likely in for a long, expensive winter. The [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#) reports that home heating costs will rise for all types of fuel. According to [Washington Gas](#), the average cost to heat a home in the Washington, DC area could rise between 20 and 32 percent over last year's costs. That's a tug on the pocketbook that can't be ignored. After studying the trends, [Money magazine](#) Managing Editor Eric Schurenberg perhaps put it best when he put it bluntly: "It's gonna hurt. It's gonna hurt."



Going without heat is hardly an option, but there are things you can do to help keep your costs down:

Check your furnace.

Perform a maintenance check. Clean the filters once a month, or as often as the manufacturer recommends, and schedule annual maintenance. If your furnace is old, consider upgrading: Furnaces more than 15-years-old will convert only 70 percent of fuel to heat, while a new model could get you 80 percent to 97 percent efficiency.

Lower thermostat settings overnight

It's a myth that it costs as much to reheat a home in the morning after the heat's been turned down overnight as it does to keep settings the same overnight as during the day. Keeping the heat low at night will indeed save you money. Set the thermostat as low as you comfortably can this winter. Consider wearing warm pajamas to bed and using extra blankets so you can lower the temperature as much as possible. Lowering the temperature 10 percent for eight hours can cut your heating tab about 10 percent. You might even want to install a programmable thermostat that automatically lowers and raises the heat at night and during the day. These thermostats cost about \$40 to \$100.

Insulation is extremely important

Insulation helps control airflow into and out of your home, keeping it warmer in the winter and cooler in summer. The easiest and most cost-effective place to add insulation is in the attic, where it should be at least six inches thick. And take note: If your house was built before 1980 and hasn't had insulation added, odds are it is under-insulated.

Look for the [Energy Star](#) label when shopping for appliances

Make an effort to buy energy-efficient appliances. Look for the Energy Star label on appliances. These products meet efficiency guidelines set by the Energy Department and the Environmental Protection Agency. For instance, replacing a dishwasher manufactured before 1994 with an Energy Star model could save you more than \$25 a year in electric or natural gas costs. For more tips on how to make your residence more energy efficient, please visit energysavers.org.

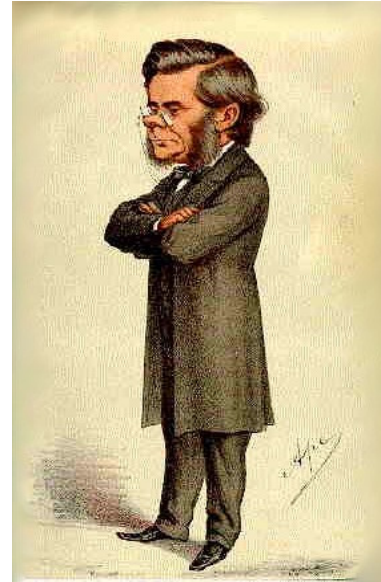
The Upcounty Road Scholar

Got a road that needs repairing? A traffic light that's out? Is there a street or intersection that you think needs a stop sign or crosswalk? One of my responsibilities is to make sure someone knows about it -- and to do what I can to get you information on your question or request as quickly as possible.

I stay in regular contact with the **Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT)** and the **Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA)**, and provide each agency with a list of projects that need addressing in the Upcounty. Both agencies receive countless requests each week, and getting a response back can take some time. So bear with me -- if you don't see a particular project listed here, that doesn't necessarily mean it has been forgotten or neglected, but rather that I haven't received an updated report on its progress this month.

With this in mind, the Road Scholar section of the newsletter provides an opportunity to give you the latest information received from DPWT, MSHA, and others on the progress of requests that have been submitted on your behalf. It's also an opportunity for you to let me know of other projects that may need to be undertaken in your community.

Additionally, I want to thank DPWT and MSHA for their efforts to get the two new streetlights into the Clarksburg community so quickly. While I know both agencies will tell me it's all part of their jobs, I know how hard it can be to get some of these things done quickly. Kudos to the staff at both of these agencies for their hard work on this project.



Got a question about roads, sidewalks, or construction in your area? [E-mail the Road Scholar](#) and let us know.

Maryland State Highways Administration Update

Here's the latest information I've received from MSHA, courtesy of MSHA District Engineer Charlie Watkins:

MD 355 at Scenery Drive (Germantown): Based on complaints from residents that heavy traffic on MD 355 was making it impossible for residents to turn from Scenery Drive onto the MD 355, I asked MSHA to consider placing a stop sign, traffic light, or other mitigation at or near the intersection. MSHA informed me that they have completed a field review of vehicles turning off both Scenery Drive and Gunners Branch onto the 355. According to MSHA:

"...vehicles exiting Scenery Drive and Gunners Branch do not experience a significant amount of delay in completing their turning maneuvers. The delays experienced by motorists along Scenery Drive and Gunners Branch Road are far less than typically experienced at many intersections in the Washington metropolitan area where residential streets connect to a major arterial. In addition, traffic signals located north and south of the intersection provide for gaps in traffic by platooning vehicles along MD 355.

"We agree that sight distance at the intersection is not optimal due to the slight horizontal and vertical curves. However, motorists who may be apprehensive about turning left may

proceed to Plummer Drive and turn at this signalized intersection. Gunners Branch Road also currently intersects MD 355 at signalized intersections approximately 1000 feet north of the subject location. Based on a spot speed study conducted during off-peak hours, the prevailing speeds along MD 355 were found to be within the acceptable tolerance above the posted speed limit. A review of police reported crashes did not identify a crash pattern correctable by the installation of a new traffic signal.

"Based on the analysis performed, the subject intersection did not meet the criteria set forth by the "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices" for the installation of a traffic signal. Therefore, we regret to inform you that we cannot comply with your request for a traffic signal at this time."

MD 124 at Hawkins Creamery Road (Damascus): Work on a newly-renovated historic house at this intersection has some drivers concerned about visibility for drivers turning from Hawkins Creamery Road onto MD 124. I asked MSHA to look into this; here's what I was told:

"...we noted that the intersection sight distance for motorists exiting Hawkins Creamery Road is limited due to the embankment along northbound MD 124 and the dip in the roadway south of the subject intersection at Clearspring Road. Please note that the newly reconstructed Historic House in the southeast quadrant is outside the line of sight for motorists and is not responsible for the limited sight distance.

"SHA follows the guidelines provided by the [American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials](#) (AASHTO) for Streets and Highways in order to analyze required and available sight distance at intersections. When motorists exiting Hawkins Creamery Road stop at the location of the stop sign, the sight distance looking left is inadequate according to AASHTO, while the sight looking right is adequate. However, motorists are allowed to pull slightly beyond the stop sign when turning onto a major street in order to increase their sight distance. Motorists have been observed doing so at this location which effectively increases the sight distance when looking left to an acceptable level. We suggest that motorists continue to exercise patience and caution in performing their maneuvers, as always required when driving."

Vox Populi

Voices From Around the Upcounty Community

A Note from Mike: I receive countless phone calls, e-mails, and letters each day. Most are passionate, many are frustrated, and a few are downright funny...but all of them are thoughtful and well-intended. I think readers of The Open Mike will be interested to hear what their Upcounty neighbors have to say, whether they're across the street or across the county. With that in mind, the "Vox Pops" section of my newsletter features highlights from some of the correspondence and phone calls I've received in my office over the past month.



"I agree 100% with Maggie's comment about Comcast in the October newsletter. Comcast is one of the most frustrating organizations I have ever dealt with. In my case, my wife and I have been trying for more than four months to get the TV cable (that runs from the Comcast box across our front yard and driveway) buried. During those four months I have called Comcast's customer service office about once a week, and they always assure me they

have referred the cable burial request to their service department, but nothing ever happens to get the cable buried. When you ask to speak to a customer service supervisor, they are always 'out.' I have even gone to their offices at 20 West Gude Drive in Rockville, where you get the

same runaround, i.e., 'no supervisor is available to speak to' and 'the request has been referred for the Comcast service department to have cable reburied.' I would shift to another cable TV company in a heartbeat, but Comcast is a monopoly, so there is not alternative to them." -- *Tom*

"I appalled that County Council is once again considering importing drugs from outside the United States. It is unsafe, as demonstrated by the federal Department of Health and Human Services Task force report from last year. It does not produce savings, as documented by the federal Department of Commerce report from last year. It is illegal, as county officials have acknowledged. It is a bad idea, as the federal FDA, located here in Montgomery County, has said." -- *Michael*

"...move to a 4 day, 10 hour per day work week. This has many advantages. First people would only have to commute 4 days a week, that is a 20% savings in fuel per week. (depending on other driving habits) Second, it would also cut down on rush hour traffic, especially if people stagger their off day. Then there are other smaller advantages, less wear on the roads, less pollution, of course this assume that people don't get out and drive a lot on their off day. And we can spend an extra day a week with our families, personally I would like more time with my kids and so would my wife:-) It seems to be a Win Win for everyone, even the employer, they still get the same 40 hours a week from us so they do not lose." -- *Marty*



2005 Farm Directories Are Now Available



Montgomery County is fortunate to be home to many working farms where residents can purchase fresh, locally-grown produce, meats, flowers, plants and other agricultural commodities. Take advantage of one of the tangible benefits of our county's Agricultural Preserve policy and do some of your shopping at one of nearly 50 farms listed in the 2005 County Farm Directory. Apart from pointing out the best places to buy meat and produce, the directory will also help you locate farms that specialize in eggs, firewood, furniture, sod, hay rides, rabbits, sheep, or, yes, even alpacas.

Directories are provided by the Montgomery County Department of Economic Development's Agricultural Services Division, with the assistance of [Celebrate Rural Montgomery](#), and are available free of charge at the Upcounty Regional Services Center as well as other places in and around the Upcounty. But you can print one out right now by visiting ruralmontgomery.com.

Go ahead -- visit a local farm and purchase from a local farmer. Continue a tradition as old as Montgomery County itself.

Contact Me

I always welcome your views and comments, whether in person, electronically, or by phone. Here's all the information you need to reach me:

Councilmember Mike Knapp

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